

Two poems on the plasticity of memory

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Souvenir

You rolled like a tourist
Into town,
Sampled some food
And scenery, purest
Of vaudeville clowns,
Performing nude.

The shirt I didn't wash
Because it smelled of you
Turned up months later,
A trophy of loss
My grief to renew
Like a pet alligator.

The time now has passed
To recite these pains.
The crown of my head
Is polished glass,
The lizard is dead—
You can see his remains.

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The Guest

From this breath on, the memories
I shall aspire to make
Sun-bleached and surrogate
To dismay my enemies

Will infect the lithosphere
Rank monsters to unleash,
Injecting twilight's crease
With a different atmosphere.

The sun itself is made to melt
From the venoms we exude
When schedules and rectitude
Vex the hired help.

Revolt gathers behind clouds,
Unrest rattles rusty dreams,
Vain pleasures wear away the seams
Of each lonely shroud.

The joints that hinge anatomy
So many roads these bones to steer
Will desiccate and disappear
Wherever chance deposits me.

Your strong arms remain the fold
Steering me through great distress,
Holding me in soft caress,
Turning tears to gold.

This sole memory I keep,
Measurement of all the rest,
Wide as its foundations deep;
Welcome, deathless guest.